

# Missouri's Top 30 Employing Occupations: A Comparison to Surrounding States and Outlook for the Future

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# Missouri's Top 30 Employing Occupations: A Comparison to Surrounding States and Outlook for the Future

## Summary

This report compares wages in the 30 largest occupations in Missouri with those in the eight surrounding states. These occupations account for about 40 percent of total employment in Missouri.

Almost two-thirds of the studied occupations pay less than the overall average wage (for all occupations) in Missouri of \$14.79 per hour. The average wage for the 28 occupations that have standard working schedules is \$11.71 per hour in Missouri.

The top 30 occupations in Missouri represent 13 of the 22 major occupational groups in the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. These occupations pay wages ranging from \$6.88 per hour for food preparation workers to \$29.82 per hour for general and operations managers. The level of education and training required also varies from Short-term on-the-job training for several occupations (waiters and waitresses, cashiers, etc.) to a Bachelor's degree or more (general and operations managers, elementary teachers, and secondary teachers).

All but one of the occupations on this year's list appeared last year. One new occupation, receptionists, entered the list at number 26 from number 32 last year. First-line supervisors of production employees, number 29 from last year fell to number 81 this year, reflecting the decline in manufacturing jobs statewide.

**Table 1**

OCCUPATIONAL TITLE	EMPLOYMENT	AVERAGE WAGE	RANKING (PREVIOUS)
Retail salespersons	78,120	\$9.51	<b>1</b> (1)
Cashiers	70,660	\$7.06	<b>2</b> (2)
Office clerks, general	57,080	\$10.30	<b>3</b> (3)
Combined food prep & serving workers, including fast food	56,700	\$6.88	<b>4</b> (6)
General & operations managers	51,690	\$29.81	<b>5</b> (7)
Waiters & waitresses	49,770	\$7.08	<b>6</b> (4)
Registered nurses	49,160	\$20.07	<b>7</b> (5)
Truck drivers, heavy & tractor-trailer	44,230	\$16.84	<b>8</b> (8)
Janitors & cleaners, except maids & housekeeping cleaners	42,960	\$8.62	<b>9</b> (11)
Customer service representatives	41,980	\$12.41	<b>10</b> (13)
Laborers & freight, stock & material movers, hand	38,580	\$10.21	<b>11</b> (10)
Nursing aides, orderlies & attendants	38,020	\$8.14	<b>12</b> (12)
Team assemblers	36,890	\$11.35	<b>13</b> (9)
First-line supervisors/managers of retail sales workers	33,550	\$13.64	<b>14</b> (14)
Secretaries, except legal, medical & executive	33,010	\$10.88	<b>15</b> (17)
Stock clerks & order fillers	32,650	\$10.17	<b>16</b> (15)
Bookkeeping, accounting & auditing clerks	30,320	\$11.79	<b>17</b> (16)
Elementary school teachers, except special education *	30,080	\$34.440	<b>18</b> (20)
First-line supv/managers of office & administrative support workers	29,370	\$16.85	<b>19</b> (18)
Maintenance & repair workers, general	27,160	\$13.93	<b>20</b> (22)
Sales reps/ wholesale & mfg, exc technical & scientific products	27,020	\$20.95	<b>21</b> (21)
Secondary school teachers, exc special & vocational education *	22,440	\$35.120	<b>22</b> (19)
Executive secretaries & administrative assistants	22,190	\$14.44	<b>23</b> (28)
Maids & housekeeping cleaners	21,440	\$7.19	<b>24</b> (25)
Carpenters	21,390	\$18.09	<b>25</b> (24)
Security guards	20,720	\$10.23	<b>26</b> (23)
Receptionists & information clerks	20,260	\$9.22	<b>27</b> (NEW)
Licensed practical & licensed vocational nurses	19,520	\$13.05	<b>28</b> (30)
Packers & packagers, hand	18,520	\$7.78	<b>29</b> (27)
Truck drivers, light or delivery services	18,110	\$12.47	<b>30</b> (26)

\*Occupations which do not work standard 2,080 hour work year

## Background

The employment<sup>1</sup> and wage estimates in this study are based on annual results generated by the 2000 Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey. Each state conducts an identical wage survey in cooperation with the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). This allows for comparison between states and Metropolitan Statistical Areas, as well as with national figures. National wage rates and rates for each state and Metropolitan Statistical Area are evaluated on the BLS web-site.<sup>2</sup> Table 1 includes the top 30 occupations, the average wage, and the employment level in Missouri.

For the years 1996-1998, the survey collected data using the OES classification system. Since 1999, all Federal agencies collecting occupational data use the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system<sup>3</sup>, allowing occupational data to be compared across agencies. Prior to the use of the SOC system, Federal agencies collecting occupational data used a variety of incompatible systems, making any general statements across the systems impossible. All workers are classified into one of about 820 detailed occupations according to their work duties. To facilitate classification, occupations are combined to reflect similar duties, skills, education and experience.

The wages used in this study represent the hourly average wage. The average wage is the estimated total wages for the occupation divided by its weighted survey employment. Hourly wage estimates are calculated using a year-round, full-time figure of 2,080 work hours per year. (The estimates assume 52 weeks and 40 hours per week.) For occupations that do not typically follow this standard work year, such as teachers, the average wages are reported on an annual basis. These occupations are marked with an asterisk (\*) within the occupational titles in Tables 1 and 3.

## Missouri Analysis

In the Standard Occupational Classification system, there are 22 major occupational groups. Missouri's top employing jobs fall into only 13 of these groups. The occupations and their related groups are shown in Table 2.

The groups not represented by the top 30 occupations in Missouri are:

- Business and Financial Operations Occupations
- Computer and Mathematical Occupations
- Architecture and Engineering Occupations
- Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations
- Community and Social Services Occupations
- Legal Occupations
- Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports and Media Occupations
- Personal Care and Service Occupations
- Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations

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<sup>1</sup> The employment estimates for each occupation are based on the total number of employees reported as part of the Unemployment Insurance Covered Employment and Wages (ES-202) program. They include all employees, salaried as well as hourly.

<sup>2</sup> The Occupational Employment Statistics estimates are published at the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) web-site. The web-site address is: <http://www.bls.gov/oes/2000/oesrcst.htm>

<sup>3</sup> For more information about the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system, see the web-site at <http://www.bls.gov/soc/soc%5Fhome.htm>

**Table 2**

Major Groups	Occupations
Management Occupations	General and operations managers
Education, Training, & Library Occupations	Elementary school teachers, except special education
	Secondary school teachers, except special and vocational education
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occupations	Registered nurses
	Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses
Healthcare Support Occupations	Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants
Protective Service Occupations	Security guards
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	Combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food
	Waiters and waitresses
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	Janitors and cleaners, except maids and housekeeping cleaners
	Maids and housekeeping cleaners
Sales and Related Occupations	First-line supervisors/managers of retail sales workers
	Cashiers
	Retail salespersons
	Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing, except technical and scientific products
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	First-line supervisors/managers of office and administrative support workers
	Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks
	Customer service representatives
	Receptionists & information clerks
	Stock clerks and order fillers
	Executive secretaries and administrative assistants
	Secretaries, except legal, medical, and executive
	Office clerks, general
Construction and Extraction Occupations	Carpenters
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	Maintenance and repair workers, general
Production Occupations	Team assemblers
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	Truck drivers, heavy and tractor-trailer
	Truck drivers, light or delivery services
	Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand
	Packers and packagers, hand

Missouri employers reported workers in 655 of the possible 820 occupations in the SOC. Total employment in these occupations numbered 2,686,370. Of the total, 2,552,860 workers were employed in occupations that typically work a standard 2,080-hour work year. There were 133,510 people employed in occupations, like teachers, that work something other than the standard work year. Employment in the 30 largest employing jobs was 1,083,590, or 40.3% of total employment (See Table 1).

As shown in Table 1, retail salespersons have the highest employment with 78,120 (3,060 fewer than the 1999-2000 study). The second highest employing occupation is cashiers with 70,660. The third largest occupation is general office clerks with employment of 57,080. The fourth largest is combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food with employment of 56,700. Each of these four occupations has an hourly wage much lower than the state average. None of the four requires more than short-term on-the-job training for entry into the occupation.

There are, however, some occupations in the Top 30 that pay higher wages. General and operations managers, the fifth largest occupation, pay an average wage of \$29.81 per hour (about \$62,025 per year).

Registered nurses, the seventh largest occupation, pay an average wage of \$20.07 per hour, which equates to \$41,746 per year. Registered nurse positions typically require an Associate's degree for entry and managers generally require a Bachelor's degree plus some experience in related occupations for entry.

## Comparing Missouri to Neighboring States

In comparing wages of the 30 largest occupations in Missouri to the surrounding states, only six Missouri jobs had lower wages than the average for all of the nine states combined. These occupations were: nursing aides and orderlies, team assemblers, elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers, hand packers and packagers, and licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses. The differences between the average wage across the states and Missouri's wage for any of these occupations was very small, \$0.44 per hour or less. (Elementary school teachers' salaries fell below the average by \$1,075.56 per year.)

In state-to-state comparisons, there were a few differences. Missouri had lower wages than Illinois for all occupations except for six: combined food preparation and serving workers, waiters and waitresses, laborers and material movers, stock clerks, sales representatives, except scientific, and security guards. Wages in Missouri were higher than those in Arkansas for all occupations with one exception: hand packers and packagers. Missouri had higher wages than Oklahoma for all occupations. The other five states paid lower wages than Missouri in two-thirds of the occupations, with the states varying on which occupations paid less. Table 3 shows the detailed occupational wages for Missouri and its eight neighboring states.

Another finding is that only three of the eight surrounding states pay elementary school teachers more than they are paid in Missouri, though Missouri's wages are lower than the overall average. Four states pay more for licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses. Both of these occupations fall into a professional or paraprofessional category. (That is, they require at least vocational training for entry into employment.) Since there continues to be a demand for both of these occupations, pressure to raise occupational wages could become greater than it has been in the past.<sup>4</sup> In the four top occupations, all of which require little skill, Missouri's wages are higher than they were last year, and higher than five or more of the surrounding states – somewhat of a turnaround from last year when six states paid more for these occupations.

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<sup>4</sup> Information about the outlook for occupations and the training necessary to obtain a job within an occupation is taken from the employment projections unit within the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC). For more information visit our web-site at: [www.MissouriEconomy.org](http://www.MissouriEconomy.org)

**Table 3: Average Wages for the 30 Largest Occupations in Missouri Compared to Surrounding States, 2000-2001 Wages**

<b>SOC CODE</b>	<b>OCCUPATIONAL TITLE</b>	<b>Missouri WAGE</b>	<b>Arkansas WAGE</b>	<b>Illinois WAGE</b>	<b>Iowa WAGE</b>	<b>Kansas WAGE</b>	<b>Kentucky WAGE</b>	<b>Nebraska WAGE</b>	<b>Oklahoma WAGE</b>	<b>Tennessee WAGE</b>
<b>41-2031</b>	Retail salespersons	\$9.51	\$8.47	\$9.81	\$9.63	\$9.18	\$8.79	\$9.48	\$9.18	\$9.86
<b>41-2011</b>	Cashiers	\$7.06	\$6.62	\$7.44	\$6.75	\$6.87	\$7.02	\$6.84	\$6.53	\$7.18
<b>43-9061</b>	Office clerks, general	\$10.30	\$8.71	\$10.58	\$10.13	\$9.60	\$9.65	\$9.93	\$9.07	\$10.03
<b>35-3021</b>	Combined food prep & serving workers, including fast food	\$6.88	\$6.32	\$6.51	\$6.44	\$6.81	\$6.48	\$7.12	\$6.44	\$6.45
<b>11-1021</b>	General & operations managers	\$29.81	\$29.50	\$31.77	\$28.66	\$30.17	\$27.31	\$27.66	\$26.28	\$29.22
<b>35-3031</b>	Waiters & waitresses	\$7.08	\$6.69	\$6.47	\$6.25	\$6.48	\$6.57	\$6.33	\$6.30	\$6.79
<b>29-1111</b>	Registered nurses	\$20.07	\$18.64	\$21.79	\$17.98	\$18.59	\$19.58	\$18.63	\$19.36	\$21.31
<b>53-3032</b>	Truck drivers, heavy & tractor-trailer	\$16.84	\$14.42	\$17.19	\$14.97	\$15.39	\$14.34	\$14.96	\$14.25	\$16.45
<b>37-2011</b>	Janitors & cleaners, except maids & housekeeping cleaners	\$8.62	\$7.28	\$9.92	\$8.96	\$8.37	\$8.11	\$8.33	\$7.58	\$7.89
<b>43-4051</b>	Customer service representatives	\$12.41	\$11.32	\$13.23	\$10.89	\$11.62	\$11.76	\$10.74	\$11.19	\$11.39
<b>53-7062</b>	Laborers & freight, stock & material movers, hand	\$10.21	\$8.80	\$9.40	\$9.88	\$9.26	\$9.77	\$9.72	\$8.80	\$9.80
<b>31-1012</b>	Nursing aides, orderlies & attendants	\$8.14	\$7.31	\$8.87	\$8.96	\$8.50	\$8.28	\$8.92	\$7.43	\$8.27
<b>51-2092</b>	Team assemblers	\$11.35	\$9.41	\$12.31	\$12.50	\$10.63	\$15.51	\$11.39	\$11.29	\$11.69
<b>41-1011</b>	First-line supervisors/managers of retail sales workers	\$13.64	\$12.30	\$16.13	\$13.86	\$12.90	\$12.62	\$14.49	\$10.87	\$13.91
<b>43-6014</b>	Secretaries, except legal, medical & executive	\$10.88	\$9.14	\$12.35	\$10.66	\$10.34	\$10.43	\$9.93	\$9.78	\$10.52
<b>43-5081</b>	Stock clerks & order fillers	\$10.17	\$8.89	\$9.99	\$9.12	\$9.60	\$9.57	\$9.36	\$9.06	\$9.15
<b>43-3031</b>	Bookkeeping, accounting & auditing clerks	\$11.79	\$10.55	\$13.48	\$11.07	\$11.15	\$11.43	\$11.08	\$11.18	\$12.00

\*Annual Wages, not hourly wages, are reported for these occupations.  
Occupations reported in order of Missouri employment.



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<b>25-2021</b>	Elementary school teachers, except special education *	\$34,440	\$32,060	\$40,850	\$32,510	\$33,350	\$37,800	\$37,140	\$31,120	\$34,280
<b>43-1011</b>	First-line supv/managers of office & administrative support workers	\$16.85	\$14.66	\$18.53	\$16.01	\$17.16	\$16.23	\$15.66	\$16.73	\$17.33
<b>49-9042</b>	Maintenance & repair workers, general	\$13.93	\$12.35	\$15.85	\$13.35	\$13.13	\$13.32	\$11.87	\$11.82	\$13.64
<b>41-4012</b>	Sales reps/ wholesale & mfg, exc technical & scientific products	\$20.95	\$19.47	\$20.60	\$19.94	\$22.43	\$20.22	\$18.48	\$18.73	\$20.95
<b>25-2031</b>	Secondary school teachers, exc special & vocational education *	\$35,120	\$33,930	\$45,970	\$33,590	\$34,390	\$39,000	\$36,490	\$32,490	\$34,780
<b>43-6011</b>	Executive secretaries & administrative assistants	\$14.44	\$13.30	\$15.37	\$13.42	\$14.82	\$13.57	\$13.06	\$12.65	\$13.70
<b>37-2012</b>	Maids & housekeeping cleaners	\$7.19	\$6.47	\$7.34	\$7.53	\$7.05	\$7.29	\$7.20	\$6.74	\$7.17
<b>47-2031</b>	Carpenters	\$18.09	\$12.64	\$22.70	\$13.64	\$15.44	\$19.08	\$14.39	\$11.97	\$13.17
<b>33-9032</b>	Security guards	\$10.23	\$8.39	\$9.89	\$8.67	\$8.90	\$8.44	\$10.36	\$9.23	\$10.13
<b>43-4171</b>	Receptionists & information clerks	\$9.22	\$8.24	\$10.26	\$9.36	\$9.24	\$9.09	\$9.28	\$8.89	\$9.35
<b>29-2061</b>	Licensed practical & licensed vocational nurses	\$13.05	\$11.70	\$14.68	\$12.73	\$13.85	\$13.22	\$12.93	\$12.08	\$13.30
<b>53-7064</b>	Packers & packagers, hand	\$7.78	\$7.87	\$8.47	\$8.41	\$7.89	\$8.26	\$9.04	\$7.54	\$8.16
<b>53-3033</b>	Truck drivers, light or delivery services	\$12.47	\$10.61	\$12.64	\$10.34	\$11.20	\$9.98	\$10.49	\$9.30	\$11.03

\*Annual Wages, not hourly wages, are reported for these occupations.

Occupations reported in order of Missouri employment.

Shaded boxes denote occupations where Missouri's wage is lower than that for the comparison state

## Comparison of Selected Occupations

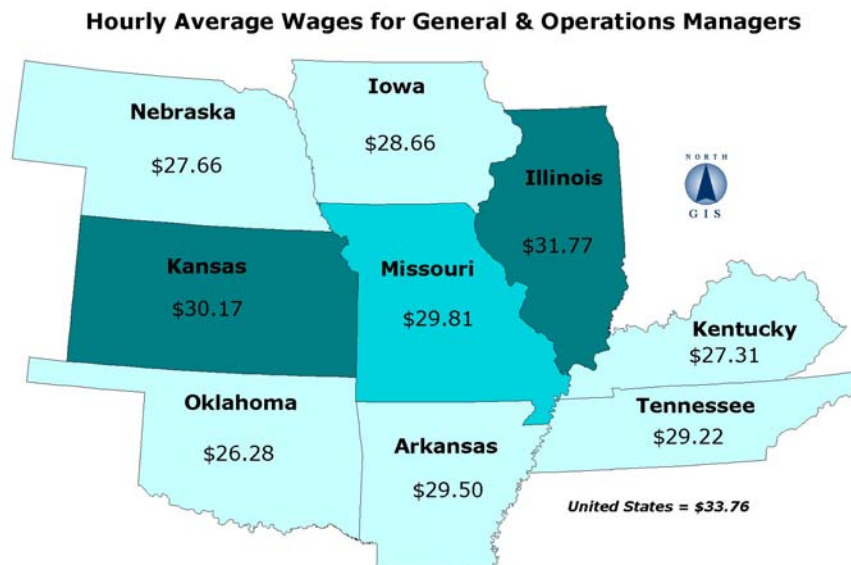
A comparison of the average wage for all occupations between Missouri and its surrounding states showed interesting results. While the national average wage (\$32,890) was significantly higher than Missouri's \$30,757, only Illinois at \$33,724 had a higher overall average wage than Missouri and the United States, for that matter (See Map 1). Additional investigation into specific occupations (all of which require more than Short Term On-the Job training for preparation show other interesting results. See Maps 2-6 for these comparisons.)

**Map 1**



General and operations managers in Illinois and Kansas fared better than those in Missouri. The U. S. average is also higher than Missouri's.

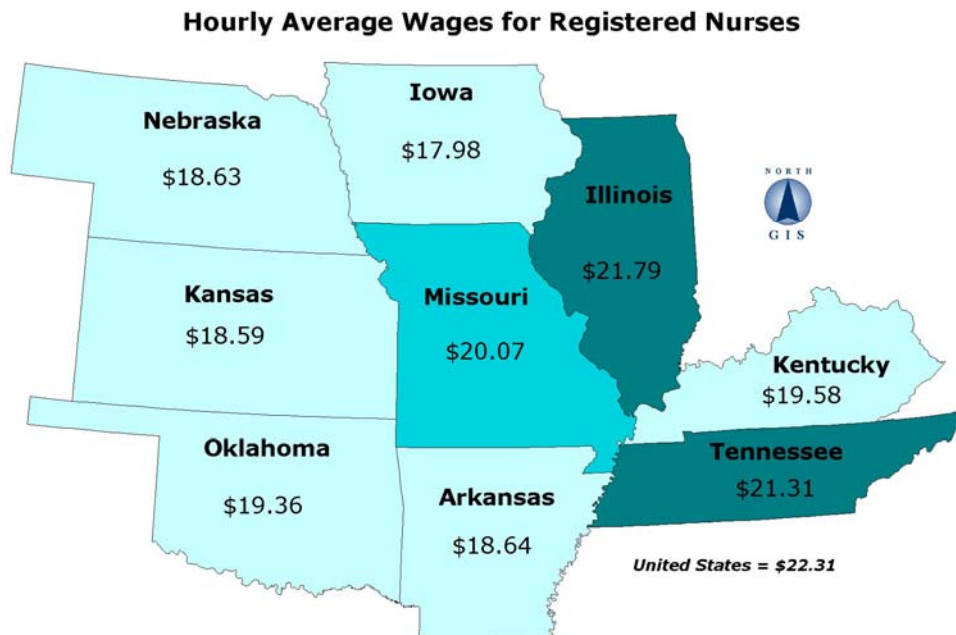
**Map 2**





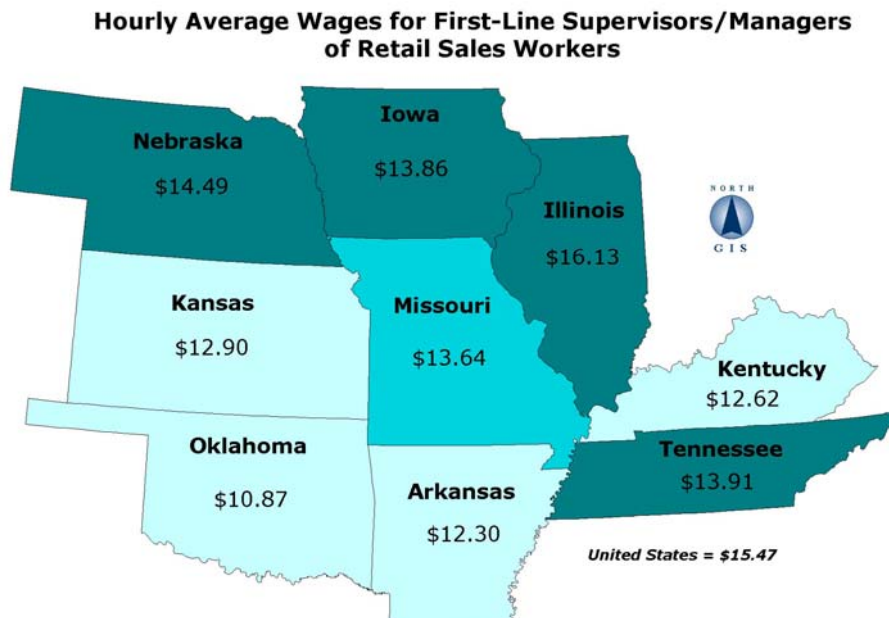
Registered nurses in Missouri earn more than they do in six of the other states. Only Illinois and Tennessee had higher wages.

**Map 3**



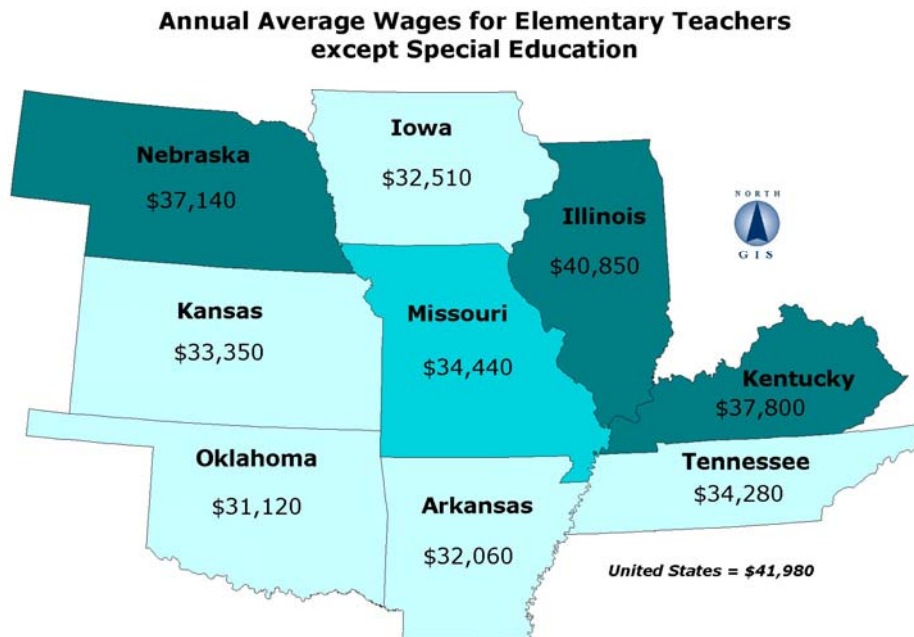
Half of the neighboring states pay Retail Sales supervisors more than they are paid in Missouri. The United States average is significantly higher also.

**Map 4**



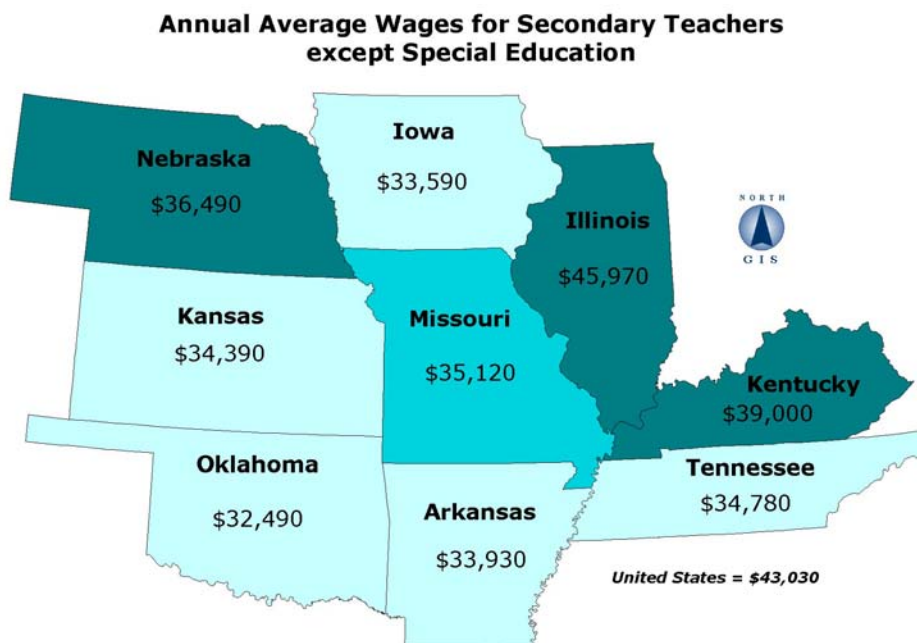
Elementary School Teachers in Missouri earn much less than the national average and their counterparts in Illinois, Kentucky, and Nebraska.

**Map 5**



Secondary School Teachers also earn much less than the national average and their counterparts in Illinois, Kentucky, and Nebraska.

**Map 6**



## Projected Openings

Numerous job openings are expected to occur in each of the thirty occupations on the list. Overall job growth is expected to be about 11 percent in Missouri through 2008 and about 98,000 job openings are expected each year. However, more than half of the top 30 occupations are expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations. Almost 40,000 job openings (more than 40% of the annual total) are expected to be found in these 30 occupations each year. With more than half of the jobs requiring only Short Term On-the-Job Training, the openings should be easy to fill, but earnings are also expected to remain low.

**Table 4**

Occupation	Percent Change	Average Annual Openings	Education and Training Requirements
<b>All Occupations</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>98,000</b>	
Retail Salespersons	12.7	3,840	Short Term OJT
Cashiers	15.6	3,720	Short Term OJT
Office Clerks, General	12.1	2,410	Short Term OJT
Combined food prep & serving workers, including fast food	7.2	2,610	Short Term OJT
General & operations managers	11.3	1,400	Work Exp + Bachelors
Waiters & waitresses	9.9	2,890	Short Term OJT
Registered nurses	15.9	1,600	Associate's Degree
Truck drivers, heavy & tractor trailer	16.0	1,290	Short Term OJT
Janitors & cleaners, except maids & housekeeping cleaners	7.2	1,210	Short Term OJT
Customer service representatives	12.7	150	Short Term OJT
Laborers & freight, stock & material movers, hand	3.6	1,600	Short Term OJT
Nursing aides, orderlies & attendants	18.3	1,210	Short Term OJT
Team assemblers	2.8	730	Short Term OJT
First-line supervisors/managers of retail sales workers	10.5	1,690	Work Exp in Related Occup
Secretaries, except legal, medical & executive	-2.5	860	Moderate Term OJT
Stock clerks & order fillers	-1.8	640	Short Term OJT
Bookkeeping, accounting & auditing clerks	-6.9	710	Moderate Term OJT
Elementary school teachers, except special education	11.0	1,200	Bachelor's Degree
First-line supervisors/managers of office & administrative workers	13.6	1,250	Work Exp in Related Occup
Maintenance & repair workers, general	5.7	690	Long Term OJT
Sales reps/wholesale & mfg, exc technical & scientific	4.7	790	Moderate Term OJT
Secondary school teachers, except special education	21.9	1,620	Bachelor's Degree
Executive secretaries & administrative assistants	6.3	390	Work Exp in Related Occup
Maids & housekeeping cleaners	9.9	660	Short Term OJT
Carpenters	8.8	910	Long Term OJT
Security guards	11.6	560	Short Term OJT
Receptionists & information clerks	16.9	890	Short Term OJT
Licensed practical & licensed vocational nurses	18.9	230	Vocational Education
Packers & packagers, hand	18.6	810	Short Term OJT
Truck drivers, light or delivery services	17.0	810	Short Term OJT

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has raised some interesting points. While the differences among the states in the Midwest region are small, they do exist. Wage differentials can be a double-edged sword. Higher wages in Missouri may be seen by the employer to be a reason not to expand or re-locate to the state. The same information could be the very reason workers choose to come to Missouri over other states.

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